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CHAMPIONS TROPHY: HYBRID MODEL AGREED IN PRINCIPLE

ICC likely to announce CT formula on Saturday after Pakistan and Indian cricket boards reportedly agree in principle to play at neutral venues

DUBAI MOST-LIKELY VENUE FOR INDIA

It is understood that India could play in Dubai during the CT next year to be held from February 19 to March 9. Reports indicate that when India host 2025 Women's ODI World Cup and 2026 men's WC, Pakistan will not travel here and play against India at a neutral venue (could be Colombo for men's WC). If India reach final then it could be at a neutral venue

OTHER SEVEN TEAMS TO PLAY IN PAK

- The CT features eight teams, divided into two groups and all countries, except India, have agreed to play in Pakistan
- The PCB had said that it was willing to accept the hybrid model only if the same arrangement will be made for all ICC events
- India have not travelled to Pakistan since the 2008 Asia Cup

8

NUMBER OF TEAMS TO PLAY IN THE CHAMPIONS TROPHY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Rajnath Singh and Priyanka Gandhi participating in a debate in LS on Friday | PTI

Rajnath Singh, Priyanka trade barbs in debate

Discussion to mark 75th year of Constitution

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE much-anticipated debate to commemorate the 75th year of the Constitution kicked off on Friday with the ruling BJP-led NDA and Opposition INDIA bloc sparring over Constitutional values, its relevance and key political issues.

Initiating the debate in the Lok Sabha, Union defence minister Rajnath Singh attacked the Congress saying a particular party always tried to 'hijack and appropriate' the framing of the Constitution. Rajnath said the Congress made 28 Constitutional amendments during Indira Gandhi's tenure and 10 during Rajiv Gandhi's rule. And the Manmohan Singh government made seven amendments. The BJP has never compromised the independence and autonomy of institutions and always adhered to the Constitution, Rajnath said.

The Constitution talked about religious freedom and it had been specified that the state would not have a religion but be secular, he added. "Opposition leaders carry the Constitution in their pockets, they have done this for generations, but the BJP holds it to its forehead," Rajnath said.

Opening the debate for the Opposition, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra rebutted Rajnath's criticisms. "Treasury bench members keep talking about the past and Nehru. Why don't you talk about the present? Tell the country what you are doing. Is everything Nehru's responsibility?" she asked in her first address in Parliament.

Priyanka also hit out at the government over the Adani issue, which invited protests. "Farm laws have been changed for industrialists. Cold storages in Himachal Pradesh were given to Adani by the Centre. Ports, airports, factories, mines and public sector units are controlled by one person. The poor are getting poorer, while the rich are getting richer," she alleged.

Referring to Rajnath's criticism of Emergency, Priyanka said, "Learn from what happened in 1975. Why don't you go back to ballot paper?"

Criticishing Prime Minister Narendra Modi, she said, "Maybe he hasn't understood that this is the Constitution of India, not the Sangh's."

Darshan, 6 others get bail in murder case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE High Court of Karnataka on Friday granted bail to actor Darshan and six other accused in the Renukaswamy murder case. The other accused are Pavithra Gowda, Nagaraju R, Anukumar, Lakshman M, Jagadeesh and Pradoosh S Rao.

The bail was granted on the grounds of delay in recording the statements of witnesses and non-furnishing of reasons for their arrest immediately to provide them an opportunity to defend themselves against custodial remand and to seek bail.

Noting that this procedure was in force since October 3, 2023, as per the orders of the Supreme Court and its non-compliance entitles the accused for bail, the court said the accused were arrested on different dates. However, the grounds for the arrest of all the accused are similar -- like a cyclostyled copy. Justice S Vishwajith Shetty stated these reasons for granting bail in his common order, while allowing the bail petitions filed by the accused.

The prosecution contended that a memo of grounds of arrest was served on the accused immediately after their arrest. The court, however, said if it is accepted, then the question arises as to why there was delay in recording the statements of the witnesses. More so, the statement of prime eyewitness Kiran, whose statement under 161 of CrPC was recorded on June 15 and another statement under Section 164 of CrPC on June 22, 2024, the court said. P3

'It's a temporary relief'

Chitradurga: Reacting to the HC granting bail to Darshan and six others, Kashinathaiah, father of Renukaswamy, said, "I have full faith in judiciary. Justice will be delivered to us. The bail is a temporary relief. We will consult our relatives on contacting the government to move SC against the bail order."

CORONATION DAY

D Gukesh receives the World Chess Championship trophy during the closing ceremony in Singapore on Friday | PIB

Approach BC panel for 2A quota, Siddaramaiah tells Panchamasalis

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayapura

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday advised the Panchamasali community to approach the Permanent Commission for Backward Classes for reservation under 2A category.

Siddaramaiah on Thursday termed the community's 'pressure tactics' for reservation as unconstitutional.

Referring to the report of former commission chairman Jayaprakash Hegde, he told reporters here that the present quota under 2A and 2B categories should remain unchanged. The 4% reservation under 2B category should not be abolished.

Replying to the allegation of opposition parties that the government is against the demand of Panchamasalis, Siddaramaiah said while views of all leaders, including Basava Jaya Mruthyunjaya seer, are welcome, a decision on the community's demand will be taken in accordance with the Constitution. P4

People submit petitions to CM Siddaramaiah in Vijayapura on Friday

EXPRESS READ

Allu Arjun arrested, granted bail

Hyderabad: Actor Allu Arjun was on Friday arrested in connection with the death of a woman at Hyderabad's Sandhya Theatre during the premiere of his movie Pushpa-2 on December 4. Hours after the arrest, the Telangana High Court granted him interim bail for four weeks | P7

COVID scam: Soudha police file first FIR

Bengaluru: Vidhana Soudha police have registered the first FIR in the alleged irregularities in purchase of medical kits during the COVID-19 pandemic in the state. However, the 10-page FIR does not mention the names of any politicians. It just says some Karnataka people's representatives | P3

Switzerland withdraws MFN status for India

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

IN a retaliatory action, Switzerland has withdrawn the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status granted to India, which will result in higher tax implications for Indian companies operating in the central European country. The Swiss action came after India's Supreme Court rejected automatic applicability of MFN clause under the bilateral tax treaty in a case related to Swiss firm Nestle.

In its December 11 order, the Swiss government said the SC's ruling shows Switzerland's interpretation of MFN clause under the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement is not shared by the Indian side. Therefore, it said it was waiving its unilateral application of MFN clause with effect from January 1, 2025. Accordingly, income accruing on or after January 1, 2025 may be taxed in Switzerland at higher rates. The applicable residual rates on dividend paid by Indian firms in Switzerland would be 10% instead of 5% under MFN clause.

The MFN clause provides for lowering of rate of taxation at source on dividends, interest, royalties, or fees for technical services similar to concessions given to other countries.

"Switzerland's move underscores the growing emphasis on reciprocity and mutual agreement in the interpretation of treaty provisions," said Sandeep Jhunjhunwala, M&A tax partner, Nangia Andersen.

RAPE-MURDER CASE

RG Kar ex-head, cop get bail

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @ Kolkata

A Sealdah court on Friday granted bail to Sandip Ghosh, former principal of state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, and Abhijit Mondol, former officer in-charge of the Tala police station, in the horrific rape-murder case of a junior doctor four months ago.

While Mondal was accused of delay in filing the FIR in the case, Ghosh was charged with tampering with evidence.

The court granted them bail as the CBI failed to submit its chargesheet within the mandatory 90 days. For its part, the CBI said its probe against the accused is ongoing.

The shocked parents of the RG Kar hospital victim waiting for justice said the system is failing them. "We thought the CBI would speed up the probe. But now, with the accused being granted bail, it feels like the system is failing us," said the mother of the murdered doctor.

Massive protests had erupted across the country after the rape-murder of the doctor in the hospital on August 9. The police arrested Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer, a day later. The CBI has filed its chargesheet against Roy.

While Mondal is expected to walk out of prison, Ghosh will remain in jail in another case of alleged financial irregularities at R G Kar.

13TH EDITION

B'lore Lit Fest kicks off today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE 13th edition of the two-day Bangalore Literature Festival (BLF) is set to kick off Saturday, bringing together nearly 350 authors and speakers.

The vibrant celebration of books, ideas, and creativity will feature leading voices from the literary and cultural spheres. Headlining the event are Nobel laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Venki Ramakrishnan, Booker Prize winner Kiran Desai, and acclaimed writers Upamanyu Chatterjee and Ramachandra Guha. International authors such as Irenosen Okojie and Nguyen Phan Que Mai will join celebrated names from diverse fields, including musician Dr L Subramaniam, philanthropist Jack Sim, popularly known as "Mr Toilet."

The lineup also includes diplomats David Puig, the Dominican Republic Ambassador to India, Juan Antonio March, the Ambassador of Spain in India, and Philip Green, the Australian High Commissioner to India.

For film enthusiasts, Malayalam actor Parvathy Thiruvothu will explore her craft, while celebrated artiste Ila Arun and legendary violinist L Subramaniam will share personal stories and insights from their illustrious careers.

Like every year, this year's festival too ensures there's something for every reader, from poetry to political biographies. Aspiring writers can pitch their stories to publishers at LitMart. P3